



Sarah Kenney <skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov>

VBH BOT FYI Legal

1 message

Robert Kosin <rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov>

To: Dolores Trandel <clerk@barringtonhills-il.gov>

Cc: Sarah Kenney <skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov>

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County website wins Sunny Award

By KEVIN P. CRAVER - kcraver@nwherald.com

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A national transparency organization has given McHenry County government's website its top rating for available information.

The county was one of 112 governments nationwide that won a "Sunny Award," or an A rating, from Sunshine Review this year.

The award means that the county met all 10 of the agency's criteria for posting budgets, meeting times and minutes, information on elected and employed officials, building permits and zoning, audits, contracts, lobbying, taxes and other public records.

McHenry, DuPage and Madison counties got A-plus ratings for their websites, and Lake and Will counties received Sunny Awards with A-minus ratings.

The McHenry County Board set getting an A-plus rating as a priority, Assistant County Administrator Adam Lehmann said.

County Board Chairman Ken Koehler, R-Crystal Lake, reiterated the priority in his State of the County address Feb. 1.

"The biggest thing I'm personally excited about is that we're taking a look at web-streaming meetings, and doing everything we can to bring more light to what we do," Lehmann said.

Sunshine Review is a nonprofit organization dedicated to government transparency, engaging citizens and holding governments accountable. It works with people and groups nationwide to promote state and local transparency.

County government over the past year has created an email newsletter and an online portal for Freedom of Information Act requests. The County Board last November adopted a requirement, proposed by a county environmental group, that officials and office seekers list land holdings and other economic interests with the county clerk.

While McHenry County received an A-plus, Sunshine Review overall gave Illinois counties a D grade. Of the 65 Illinois county governments that have websites, 41 of them are ranked D or F by the group.

Sunshine Review rates the state government's website with a B grade.

Other neighboring counties do not rank as high as McHenry. Sunshine

Review ranks Kane County's website as a B-minus, Cook County's as a C, and Boone County's as a D.

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"No More Excuses" is an ongoing Northwest Herald series about the public's right to know in Illinois.

On the Net

- You can visit McHenry County government's website at www.co.mchenry.il.us.
- To learn more about Sunshine Review, visit www.sunshinereview.org.
- Visit foia.ilattorneygeneral.net to learn more about the state's Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act.

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